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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a study designed to determine the congruency of preservice student learning experiences with student needs and expectations. During the 1991-1992 academic year, 39 secondary student teachers responded to 3 analytical questions about their student teaching experiences. Responses were analyzed and ranked in three categories. In the category "Things about Student Teaching That Went Well," student teachers ranked "good relationship with cooperating teachers" first, followed by "got along with students very well." In the category "Things about Student Teaching That Did Not Go Well," they ranked "lack of student discipline" first, followed by "classroom management organizational skills." In the category "Reasons Student Teaching Did Not Go Well," they ranked "inconsistency in handling student discipline" first, followed by "teaching above class." Ranked lowest were "lack of adequate lesson preparation time" and "lack of knowledge of computer software used by teacher." Analysis of the results indicated that since the things student teachers listed as not having gone well were subjects taught in teacher preparation courses, consideration should be given to changing the design of courses and program in two areas: improvement in courses that provide students with strong content mastery and providing intensive corrective supervision to student teachers. (IAH)

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DEFINING TEACHER EDUCATION: BY RECOGNIZING WHAT STUDENTS EXPECT FROM EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Introduction

It appears that meaningful change is advocated for all levels of education in todays schools. These changes are advocated to make learning outcomes better for students. Though some changes or reforms are advocated for many programs in teacher preparation, teacher educators still need to know if they are providing student learning experiences consistent with needs and expectations.

Teacher education programs in the name of various reforms or gaining approval by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education are trying to design curricular experiences to be certain of a particular educational product. Teacher education preparation is a difficult process to get the desired end product produced by a program. In fact teachers must be produced who can perform well in a variety of difficult student learning situations. According to Huling-Austin and etal (1989) teaching must fit the learner, the context, and the knowledge or the skill being taught. Though the teaching process is comprehensive and complex, the teaching behavior in the classroom must be practiced in regard to technique with some degree of sameness. So teacher education programs will need to match program student experiences with student needs to produce an effective product.

Brief Literature Review

In a study of 476 prospective teachers, the participants were asked to do a self-analysis of preparation to meet future demands of the teaching role. Nixon and Bumbarger (1984) in this study found that less than half felt adequately prepared and

most placed heavy emphasis on the practicum component to remedy shortcomings. Perhaps, a new better prepared kind of teacher is needed.

According to Kennedy (1991) virtually all of the blue-ribbon commissions that have studied education in the last decade have argued that we need a new and better kind of teaching: (1) teaching that challenges students more than our current methods do, (2) that expects more of students, (3) that demands higher-order thinking from them, and (4) that prepares them for the work place of tomorrow. To prepare many of the students that are in our elementary and secondary schools for tomorrow's work place, a different kind of teacher must be prepared by our teacher education programs.

It is common agreement by most teachers of our elementary and secondary schools that the student body has changed. The student body of our schools has changed perhaps, in many ways. Some of these student body changes are as follows:

1. More and more students have had adult type experiences at a much younger age.

2. More students will not accept learning as being valuable simply because the teacher said so.

3. Some students have seen the world of survival in ways unlike any the teacher has been exposed.

4. More students have seen life and death situations in a manner the teacher perhaps will never see.

5. More and more students are reluctant learners.

I believe it is fair to conclude that a new and different kind of teacher must be produced by teacher education programs. Kennedy (1991) also concluded that since the student body itself is changing, teachers must learn not only to teach differently

but also to teach a different kind of student, one who has traditionally been alienated from schools and from academic subjects.

Since the bottom line of reform is change lets review some reform changes that have been tried in education over the past 30 years. According to Gibboney (1991):

> From the 1960's, we have the new math and the new science curricula, whose development was accelerated by the firestone of criticism set off by the 1957 launch of Sputnik I. But the 1960's also brought us ungraded schools, open classrooms, audio-lingual language laboratories, and programmed instruction. The 1970's ushered in behavioral objectives, Chicago mastery learning (with its 273 discrete reading skills), a growing movement toward holding schools accountable, and the closely related competency-based curricula and testing. The 1980's gave birth to the so-called excellence movement, which itself spawned statewide testing programs in more than 35 states and touched off an overall effort to raise standards. But the 1980's also build on research on effective schools and effective teaching that begin in the 1970's. The creation of new networks of school reform, such as Mortimer Adler's Paideia proposal and Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, were small lights that shone against the gray sky of reform . . . .

Gibboney (1991) concluded that an analysis of more than 30 school reform efforts between 1960 and 1990 shows that they did not result in fundamental reform. In addition, most of these reform efforts have resulted into little if any fundamental change in how students majoring in education are prepared to teach.

New teachers have expressed their needs in some education studies. For instance Veenman (1984) found that new teachers reported needing (1) guidance and support in disciplining students (2) motivating students, (3) dealing with the individual differences of students, (4) assessing students' work, (5) relating to parents, (6) organizing class work, and (7) obtaining materials and supplies.

Odell (1986) in a study of beginning teachers who received assistance and direct observation of the needs of new teachers during the first year, found the needs of new teachers in rank order to be: (1) ideas about instruction, (2) personal and

emotional support, (3) advice or resources and materials for teaching, (4) information on school district policies and procedures, and (5) ideas for additional techniques on classroom management. The need for classroom management and ideas about instruction is consistent with both studies.

Some writers feel principals should assume a more active role in teacher preparation programs. Frye (1988) stated that problems of beginning teachers could be solved by increased support during the initial year and increased involvement of principals in the preservice preparation program.

Cooperating teachers have given their perception of the most critical area of student teachers. Kelly and Kelly (1983) reported that cooperating teachers were most critical of student teachers in classroom management. So, are student teachers receiving learning experiences in their present teacher preparation program consistent with their needs and expectations?

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to determine the congruency of student learning experiences with student needs and expectations. In an era of change, it is always helpful for teacher educators to know whether learning experiences are consistent with student needs.

Method

During the fall semester of 1991, 51 secondary students were asked to reflect on their student teaching experience by responding to three questions. These questions were designed to examine the congruency of student learning experiences with student needs and expectations. Of the 51 secondary student teachers, 39 responded to the following three analytical questions:

1. What about your student teaching that went well?
2. What about your student teaching that did not go well?
3. Why do you think these things did not go well?

Results

Three tables were created to display the frequency of student responses to the three questions proposed in rank order. The results are reported in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

Table 1 shows the response to the question, "What about your student teaching that went well." Good relationship with cooperating teacher was listed the number 1 ranking and got along with students very well was listed as the number 2 ranking. The number 3 and 4 ranking were respectively listed supportive staff and opportunity to visit and observe other teachers.

TABLE 1
Things About Student Teaching That Went Well

Rank		
1	Good relationship with cooperating teachers	30
2	Got along with students very well	21
3	Supportive staff	11
4	Opportunity to visit and observe other teachers	5
5	Able to use various techniques of teaching	4
6	Textbooks were helpful and easy to teach from	3
7	Handling fund raisers Learned student's names	2 2

Table 2 shows in rank order the responses to the question, "What about your student teaching that did not go well." Lack of student discipline achieved the number 1 ranking and classroom management organization skills the number 2 ranking. Teaching at the level of the students and students with bad attitudes toward

school were tied for the number 3 ranking. The number 4 ranking was inability to be authority figure in the classroom. Motivation, getting students to do what you want them to do, knowing what to do, and lack of knowing exactly what to expect from student teaching were three way ties for the number 5 rank.

TABLE 2
Things About Student Teaching That Did Not Go Well

Rank		
1	Lack of student discipline	19
2	Classroom management organizational skills	9
3	Students with bad attitude toward school	7
3	Teaching at the level of the students	7
4	Inability to be authority figure in classroom	6
5	Motivating, getting students what you want them to do	5
5	Knowing what to do	5
5	Lack of knowing exactly what to expect from student teaching	5
6	Some students wanted to be a fried and not a student	3
6	Lack of enough latitude in teaching style	3
7	Complaints about test results	2

Table 3 records the ranked frequency of student teacher responses to the question, "Why do you think these things did not go well. Inconsistency in handling student discipline was listed as the number 1 reason for the aspect of student teaching not going well. Teaching above the class was given the number 2 ranking for the reason student teaching did not go well. Students think of student teacher as a student and not enough time spent on expectations of student teacher received the

number 3 and number 4 ranking respectively. The number 5 ranked reason earned a tie with expected to teach like cooperating teacher and student teacher needs help with classroom management skills. The sixth ranked reason was a tie between lack of adequate lesson preparation time and lack of knowledge of computer software used by teacher.

TABLE 3
Reasons Student Teaching Did Not Go Well

Rank		
1	Inconsistency in handling student discipline	13
2	Teaching above class	8
3	Students think of student teacher as a student	7
4	Not enough time spent on expectations of student teacher	5
5	Expected to teach like cooperating teacher	3
5	Student teachers need help with classroom management skills	3
6	Lack of adequate lesson preparation time	2
6	Lack of knowledge of computer software used by teacher	2

Conclusions

The things that secondary student teachers felt went well during their student teaching experience appear to be those things that we spend very little or no time teaching in teacher education programs. For instance, the listings with the top 3 rankings were (1) good relationship with cooperating teachers, (2) students liked me or rapport with student, and (3) got along with students very well. Should 2 and 3 be combined, then the next highest ranking is: opportunity to visit and observe other

teachers. Again these are not concepts we commonly find in teacher education preparation courses.

When the list of things about the student teaching that did not go well is analyzed, the top 3 rankings are: (1) lack of discipline, (2) classroom management organization skills and (3) teaching at the level of the student and students with bad attitude toward school.

This list of things that did not go well for the student is taught in the student's teacher education preparation curriculum. Yet many student teachers are experiencing difficulty with these aspects of teaching. Could it be that our preparation courses for student teachers are not content specific for the present population of students in our secondary schools.

The reasons the student teachers gave for why their teaching did not go well in the top 3 rank order are as follows: (1) inconsistency in handling student discipline, (2) teaching above the class, and (3) students think of student teacher as a student. Thus, these reasons are consistent with what the students needed to know to make their teaching go well.

Strategies

Since some of the things students listed about their teaching that did not go well are taught in teacher preparation programs, it appears to me the design of the courses and program should be changed. Again, secondary student teachers expressed a need for skills in (1) student discipline, (2) classroom management and organization, (3) teaching at the level of the student, and (4) working effectively with students with a bad attitude toward school. The teacher education program, therefore, should be changed to produce a congruence between student needs and

curriculum experiences and expectation from the program. Teacher education improvement strategies are presented in two levels. Level I are courses taught in the specified areas to give the students a strong mastery of the content. Level II is an approach to provide intensive corrective supervision to the student teacher.

Level I

In Level I teacher education programs will develop/design individual courses for secondary teacher education majors in student discipline, classroom management and organization and effective techniques for secondary student learning. Throughout this level a strong emphasis must be placed on how students learn and cognitive psychology to better understand the behavior of students.

Level II

Level II strategy is the second part of Level I. At this level, the university supervisor will become a clinical supervisor for the courses taught to the students in Level I. The clinical supervisor will reteach or review with student teachers all skills taught in each course at Level I and follow the student to the classroom for correct in the classroom implementation practices. Level II strategy must be implemented during the student teaching experience. The university clinical supervisor will observe, critique and give the student teacher immediate feed-back on skills taught or retaught in the areas of need. It is at this level when student teachers have teaching access to the classroom. Therefore, for this strategy to be effectively implemented, the student teacher must be in the classroom teaching in a regular teacher-student setting.

The cooperating teacher and school principal must also be trained in clinical techniques of teaching and supervision. This will make it possible for building level

supervision for the student teacher to be the same as university supervision. Cooperating teacher and principal training will also, with proper coordination, enable the university teacher education program to have more skilled support and assistance at the building level with student teacher instructional improvement techniques in the classroom.

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